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**MAZZONI CENTER'S 'ELIXIR' EVENT ON FRIDAY, MAY 20
WILL BENEFIT THE AGENCY'S PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
IMPACTING LGBT YOUTH**

Mazzoni Center's annual fundraiser returns to Center City this spring with **Elixir: the Cure for the Common Gala**, which will take place at the Loews Philadelphia Hotel (1200 Market Street) on **Friday, May 20 from 7:00-10:00 P.M.**, with a special VIP reception from 6:00-7:00 P.M. Mazzoni Center will recognize a few individuals and organizations for their contributions to the health and wellbeing of the LGBT community, including special guest **Dr. Ruth Westheimer**, who will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award; along with **Pennsylvania State Senator Vincent J. Hughes and his wife Sheryl Lee Ralph**, who will receive a Walter Lear Award; and **David McFarland, Interim Executive Director of The Trevor Project**, who will accept the Peter Mazzoni Award on behalf of his organization.

"In their various ways, each of these individuals and organizations has made a measureable impact on the populations that we serve," Mazzoni Center Executive Director Nurit L. Shein, said, "whether through education and facilitating an open dialogue about sexuality in the case of Dr. Ruth; or raising public awareness around the issues of HIV/AIDS in the case of Senator Hughes and Sheryl Lee Ralph; or through providing life-saving and life-affirming resources for young people across the country, as The Trevor Project has done with its crisis intervention lifeline since 1998."

Guests at *Elixir* will enjoy cocktails, a selection of passed hors d'oeuvres and buffet, musical entertainment by DJ Carl Michaels, plus a silent auction, special live performances and more. Guests who purchase VIP tickets to the event are automatically entered into a raffle to win one of two Elite Island Resort Vacations for two, both of which include round-trip airfare and seven days on Palm Island. VIP guests will also enjoy a meet and greet with Dr. Ruth, plus

cocktails, appetizers, and live music by international guitarist Monnette Sudler. **Tickets for Elixir are available at: www.mazzonicenter.org**

Guests will also explore an exhibition of photo portraits by award-winning Philadelphia-based photographer Rachelle Lee Smith as part of the event. The photographs were taken over the past decade as part of a project called *pride/prejudice voices of LGBTQ youth*, and include statements made by each subject about identity and representation. Smith will be on hand to talk about her photos and her ongoing work on the project.

Funds raised through *Elixir* will support Mazzoni Center's programs and services in health, wellness, education, and outreach programming for youth. The agency sees 4,500 young people annually in its health center, in counseling programs, at its testing locations, and through the Ally Safe School and Project LEAD school programs, among other areas.

Elixir co-chair Kelly Harris said: "In addition to celebrating the work of others who have made an impact, we hope to raise funds for and awareness about the young people in our community who continue to need our support and direct services."

Tickets and more information at: www.mazzonicenter.org

About Dr. Ruth Westheimer

Dr. Ruth Westheimer is a psychosexual therapist who pioneered speaking frankly about sexual matters on radio with her program, *Sexually Speaking*, which was first broadcast in 1980 on WYNY-FM (NBC) in New York, and quickly shifted from a 15-minute pre-recorded show to a live, one-hour broadcast during which Dr. Ruth, as she became known, answered call-in questions from listeners. Her career soon expanded into broadcast and cable television programs such as *The Dr. Ruth Show* and *Ask Dr. Ruth*, which were syndicated both nationally and internationally.

Born in Germany in 1928, Dr. Westheimer was sent to a children's home in Switzerland at the age of ten which became an orphanage for most of the German Jewish students who'd been sent there to escape the Holocaust. At 17 she went to Israel where she fought for that

country's independence as a member of the Haganah, the Jewish freedom fighters. She then moved to Paris where she studied at the Sorbonne and taught kindergarten. She immigrated to the U.S. in 1956 where she obtained her Masters Degree in Sociology from the Graduate Faculty of the New School of Social Research. In 1970, she received a Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) in the Interdisciplinary Study of the Family from Columbia University Teacher's College. She worked for Planned Parenthood for a time and it was that experience that prompted her to further her education in human sexuality by studying under Dr. Helen Singer Kaplan at New York Hospital-Cornell University Medical Center.

She is the author of more than 35 books, and her syndicated column, *Ask Dr. Ruth*, appears in newspapers around the world. She is currently serving as the Honorary President of the Council on Sexuality and Aging at the National Sexuality Resource Center. Currently Dr. Westheimer is an Adjunct Professor at N.Y.U. and an Associate Fellow of Calhoun College at Yale University, and a Fellow of Butler College at Princeton University. She is a fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine and in addition to having her own private practice, she frequently lectures at universities across the country and has twice been named "College Lecturer of the Year." Dr. Westheimer has two children, four grandchildren and lives in New York City.

About Vincent J. Hughes and Sheryl Lee Ralph

Senator Vincent J. Hughes has been member of the Pennsylvania Senate representing the 7th Senatorial District since November 1994, and currently serves as Democratic Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. He has been recognized both locally and nationally for his work on HIV/AIDS. He is credited with helping to facilitate the largest increases in HIV funding in Pennsylvania's history, for the past four consecutive years. Most recently he announced a \$1.5 million state grant to expand the City of Philadelphia's HIV/AIDS testing programs. His efforts also include securing a \$500,000 grant in 2006 for Keystone Hospice to enable the facility to expand its services and enhance its ability to care for more patients affected by HIV/AIDS; moving the state Senate to unanimously adopt a resolution to designate February 7, 2003, as National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; partnering with the national Black AIDS Institute for the Philadelphia effort for the "Rhythms of Health Tour," and sponsoring "Can We Talk" forums to promote dialogue around the issue of HIV/AIDS. His wife, **Sheryl Lee Ralph**

is an acclaimed veteran of film, television and the Broadway stage, known for originating the role of Deena Jones on Broadway in the landmark musical *Dreamgirls*. She is also an honored AIDS activist and the founding director of the DIVA (AIDS) Foundation 501(C)3, which she created in memory of the many friends she has lost to HIV/AIDS. Ms. Ralph sits on the boards of Project Angel Food and The Black AIDS Institute and is the celebrity spokesperson for the National Minority AIDS Council. In 2010 the couple launched a website (“testtogether.org”) and public awareness campaign that encourages couples, friends and family members to get tested for HIV together, and seeks to reduce the stigma and silence around the issue of HIV/AIDS for the education and better health of all.

On Friday, May 20, Mazzoni Center will present Hughes and Ralph with the **Walter Lear Award**, named in honor of the late Walter Lear (1923-2010), an activist on behalf of civil rights, the peace movement, advocacy for health care and patients’ rights, and for the health and wellbeing of minority communities including racial minorities and LGBT individuals.

About The Trevor Project

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services for LGBTQ youth. Every day, The Trevor Project saves young lives through its free and confidential lifeline, in-school workshops, educational material, online resources and advocacy. For more information, visit www.TheTrevorProject.org.

The Trevor Project Executive Director David McFarland will be attending *Elixir* to accept the **Peter Mazzoni Award** on behalf of the organization, which reflects the values that Peter M. Mazzoni, M.D. (1959-1990) embodied throughout his life: compassion, determination, generosity, an unrelenting courage, a commitment to serving others, and respect for all.

About Mazzoni Center

Established in 1979, **Mazzoni Center** provides quality comprehensive health and wellness service and is the only health care provider in the Philadelphia region specifically targeting the unique health care needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities. Mazzoni offers a full array of outreach, prevention, education, direct medical and

care services, psychosocial services, legal services, and support groups, and is dedicated preserving the dignity and improving the quality of life of the individuals it serves. It is the oldest AIDS service organization in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the fourth-oldest in the U.S. It is named after Dr. Peter Mazzoni (1959-1990), an early volunteer and one of the first medical directors of PCHA, whose humanism, integrity and compassion were an inspiration to those around him. With over 30,000 individuals benefiting annually from its services, Mazzoni Center is a leader among community-based organizations in the greater Philadelphia area. More information at: www.mazzonicenter.org